

## It's Who You Know...And Who *They* Know

Given the chance, you could probably come up with a hundred instances during which you've benefited from the assistance of a friend-of-a-friend. Perhaps your daughter attends piano lessons with the same instructor your best friend's cousin uses for her children. Maybe your aunt is having an allergic reaction to a cosmetic, and you are able to connect her with your college roommate, now a dermatologist. Or perhaps you wish to take golf lessons, knowing that your friend tees off every weekend with the wife of the local—and exclusive—golf pro.

In everyday life, we rarely hesitate to offer or request a beneficial connection. So why do we often fail to recognize this valuable resource in our professional lives? Especially in a job-seeking environment hurt deeply by a bad economy, there are dozens of plausible employment possibilities only a few degrees away!

So I invite you to browse the next few pages, and hopefully you'll be inspired to tap into your own resources. Who you know is very important, but always be sure to consider who *they* know, how *they* may benefit you in the long run...and *how you may benefit them!* You may be surprised how quickly your own resources suddenly seem limitless!

As I always say, if you have feedback or a story idea you'd particularly like to see in future issues, please feel free to send an email to [newsletter@flowork.com](mailto:newsletter@flowork.com). See you next month!

John-Paul Hatala, Ph.D., Flowork Founder



This month's FlowTIP:  
*Share your goals  
with your network.*  
See page 3 for more information.

## What's New?

### Dr. Hatala on Twitter

Want to stay up-to-the-minute with social networking news, tips, and ideas? Follow Flowork founder, Dr. John-Paul Hatala, on Twitter! If you don't already have one, sign up for your own account at [twitter.com](http://twitter.com), then search for [jphatala](https://twitter.com/jphatala) and click on *follow*. You can also view Twitter updates on the Flowork homepage at [www.flowork.com](http://www.flowork.com).



### Dr. Hatala Blogging on ContactPoint.ca

Dr. John-Paul Hatala has been chosen as a Blogger on the popular career practitioner website, Contact Point, a multi-sector online community for professionals in the career



development field. To take a look, visit [www.contactpoint.ca](http://www.contactpoint.ca). Make sure you stop by soon and check it out!

### Online Flowork Training Programs

Flowork is pleased to announce the release of two new online training programs; Social Capital Development Training and Strategic Job Search Management. Both of these programs are now available online at the Learning Community at Flowork. Flowork is also pleased to announce that if you are a non-profit, you can gain access to these training programs for your staff and clients free. Email us at [onlinetraining@flowork.com](mailto:onlinetraining@flowork.com) to gain access to the training programs to see if they are right for your staff and clients.



# Research on Job Networking Skills

## *Putting a new spin on "Who You Know"*

It's official: success in job networking depends not only on "who you know" but also who you didn't know you knew...at least according to academics researching the subject of Social Capital theory.

Theorists have identified that the best of job-hunting resources may indeed be at our fingertips. This is good news for the recently unemployed, those seeking career advancement or those of us keeping our eye on the job market "just in case." Typically, one's social network provides the job hunter with the resource needed to regain employment or obtain advancement in his or her field. Yet job seekers often don't know it— or, more likely, they lack the skills as to how to leverage it and find themselves once again gainfully (re-)employed.

Despite the intense popularity of the social networking wonders of the internet like Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, many of us simply do not realize the job-rich potential our existing social network may contain. Ironically, we all arduously seek to expand our online tally of "friends" at the same time.

What's more, many of us have heard from networking "fore-fathers" that merely *knowing* of someone who can help is not enough. Some of our social ties are weak and often are no better than simply waiting until our dream job gets listed on a favorite job board. *C'est la vie*, right?

Or wrong?

Researchers leading the way in developing social capital theory suggest that the evidence is indeed contrary to this age-old belief. Dr. J.P. Hatala, Flowork founder, suggests that most of us simply lack the skills and confidence necessary to approach our social networks and avail ourselves of the resources they likely offer. If this is true, the strength of the ties in our social network may not be the key factor your old man suggested it was.

Moreover, "reaching out and confidently letting those in your network know you are skilled, educated and ready to work is much more likely to produce the results that we seek," says Dr. Hatala.

Flowork's research suggests that really knowing your network and employing a series of strategic approaches to exploit its potential is essential. The job seeker is then able to improve their position as long as there is the means of contact. Here's where the internet enters the picture, right?



Not necessarily. The means of communication must go beyond simply utilizing cyberspace alone. Internet social networking websites like Twitter are no doubt valuable in terms of effective networking, but they are not the magic wand many of us hoped they would be.

Research also suggests getting out there and contacting those in your network directly is an essential component to an advanced, efficient, and valuable networking approach. Dr. Hatala notes that people skills remains paramount in efficient networking models. This suggests that "being proactive, comfortable, and asking for help and soliciting feedback" are all fundamental to a successful strategic networking approach.

Interestingly, common sense prevails in terms of the approach that Flowork uses to train businessmen and women to be more strategic practitioners of social networking. Such elements in the teaching model include:

- information gathering
- initiating contact
- network spanning
- communication preferences
- assertiveness
- confidence
- flexibility

Fortunately, the methodology is straightforward and all very teachable. It is also what characterizes Dr. Hatala's model used at Flowork International.

Dr. Hatala brings the tenets of Social Capital theory (see next page) to the Flowork Model in training contemporary practitioners of networking to be more strategic in their job hunt approaches.

So, does this mean that modern business networking simply all boils down to 'who we know', just as our generational predecessors once suggested? Perhaps it both *is* and *is not* that simple. Academic theory aside, learning how to strategically exploit the potential of our own social networks is a skill that contemporary job seekers can no longer afford to ignore—especially in the face of the rapidly expanding era of international business networking.

What's more, those who focus just as much of their efforts on leveraging the potential of their existing network as they do on expanding it with Facebook or Twitter stand a far better chance in the job-hunt/career advancement battle in the long run as we all seek to gain a leg up in a competitive business world.

# Using a Logical Set of Networking Skills and Abilities

## Knowing Your Network

- Information gathering is key here. Nothing is more detrimental to a job seeker's efforts than failing to know who really is within their social network. This, of course, brings into play the job seeker's skill in doing so. (Read: the organizationally-challenged need not apply.)

## "Contact!"

- Initiating contact is fundamental to a successful strategic approach. Moreover, the individual's ability to "cultivate, nurture and manage network relationships is key." In other words, waiting for your social network to come to you with the information you need will generally fail miserably.

## No More (Than Six) Degrees of Separation!

- The ability to reach out and connect to other member's in one's network is an important skill and allows one to outmaneuver the obstacles associated with the notion of degrees of separation. This answers the earlier-noted criticism, which questions the value of weak ties.

## Know Thyself

- Confidence is key in any endeavor, right? That has never been more true than when it comes to knowing what you have to offer: your background, experience and education. Coupled with clear goals and objectives, is there any excuse to not be confident in approaching others in your network?

## "Steppin' Out"...of Your Comfort Zone

- This is the tough part, right? Not necessarily. Actually getting out there and seeking resources and information from others in a social network need not be awkward if you've applied the previous step and know yourself and what you have to offer.

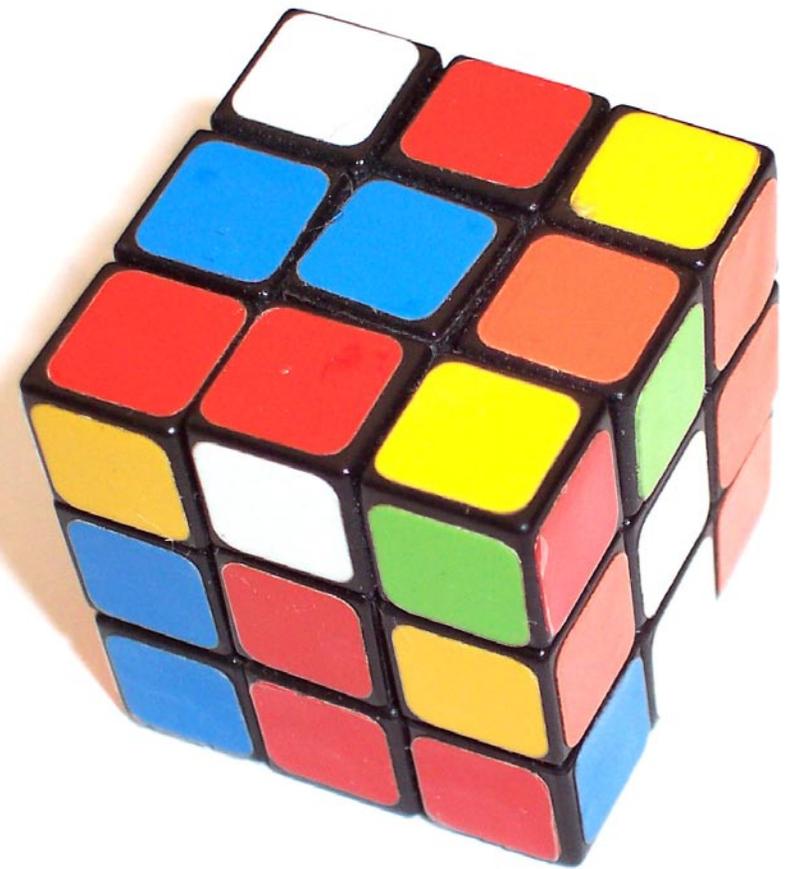
## Being Flexible and Asking for Feedback

- Being willing to accept others' comments and to, in fact, solicit their feedback is key. This is often missed, and the failure to solicit feedback could represent a major setback, since it

sometimes offers a key insight into a specific problem within the job hunt. We've got to ask for it and be willing to hear what they have to say—and we may just hear something invaluable.

## Technology

- Having access to technology certainly helps expand the communications reach; social networking websites (which abound) can be of great assistance in the job hunt/career advancement battle. Understanding technology and its uses is vital if an individual wishes to avail themselves of all it has to offer. We need not be intimidated by social networking websites, however, as most are designed with user-friendliness in mind.



## This Month's flowTIP:

**Share your goals with your network.** When's the last time you set a goal, wrote it down and shared it with everyone you knew? Most likely, if you're like the majority, you didn't share it with too many people. It's typical for individuals to fail to share their goals with others, and it happens for a number of reasons. Perhaps you don't want to bother people with your interests, or maybe you simply never considered sharing your goals in the first place. But it's important to remember a very important fact: it tends to be a lot easier to accomplish our goals if we get the help of others! More importantly, it is likely much more efficient to leverage the social resources that exist within our networks than trying to accomplish something on our own. The next time you wish to achieve a goal, tell as many people as you can what you're doing. You'll see how much easier it will be!

*Never refuse any advance of friendship, for if nine out of ten bring you nothing, one alone may repay you.*  
-Madame Claudine Guérin de Tencin (1682-1749)

## “Who (Do) You Know” in the Internet Age?

Many countries around the world have an ever-increasing number of unemployed residents, many of whom are lamenting that job-hunting is not what it once was. Job-hunters often find themselves rapidly losing heart amidst the complex array of social networking websites and job boards, wearily filling out one online profile after another.

Nonetheless, despite what may seem to be today’s new job-hunting “reality,” though, the statistics suggest that the method of job-hunting utilized by the pre-internet generation has changed little today. Studies show that 80% of all jobs still come through those we know or those whom they know.

The pre-internet reality of ‘who you know’ apparently still holds true.

Granted, no one denies the value of online social networking tools in helping one to expand social reach. But networking by itself is nothing new, despite its modern high-tech face. In fact, if the above statistic is any indicator, it may be even more important, since one’s own social circle contains the greatest potential resource for finding new employment opportunities.

According to experts in the field, focusing exclusively on expanding one’s online circle does not necessarily translate into the kind of meaningful connections that will help one land a job, especially if they lack the necessary strategic know-how to leverage them. Despite the bevy of online resources and advice aimed at expanding our networking reach, many job-hunters still lack correct, efficacious networking skills. And this (regardless of one’s impressive quantity of online friends) remains the apex of the job-hunting problem.

An individual’s real friends (especially those of the non-online variety) are more likely to be the key to finding a job one seeks. Indeed, Flowork founder Dr. J.P. Hatala suggests that many simply lack the basic skill of how to take advantage of the resources found in their own network. If this is true, job-hunters are unfortunately consigned to working with that 20% remainder (remembering that 80% of all jobs are from known contacts), when on the job-hunt.

Certainly not an uplifting prospect.

Dr. Hatala’s research shows that while an individual might acknowledge the value of an established list of friends, they generally fail to recognize the value of that next degree of separation, that is, the people their friends may know. The good news, however, is that leveraging the value of the relationships contained in one’s real (and online) circle of friends is a teachable skill.

No one would argue that hiding behind the computer screen is unlikely to successfully bridge the gap between job-hunter and prospective employer. Spending hours online trying to solicit more “followers” on your Twitter account adds little value to your networking circle, especially if you do not know how to develop the relationships themselves and avail yourself of their potential.

The advent of online social networking is by no means a drawback, however, and expanding your social circle via the internet certainly couldn’t hurt. The key, however, is learning how to correctly reach out to those you know to find out who they know.

It would seem that the ‘old’ reality of who you know remains just as relevant in today’s job market than ever before, regardless of whether you know someone in person or online.



Flowork offers the benefits of social capital to anyone of any age. The Education Flowork Program offers educational institutions (Kindergarten through higher education) to ensure their students, faculty and staff become aware of the power of information by networking. Corporate Flowork and the Flowork Workforce Development Program introduces corporations, non-profit organizations, government, and workforce development groups to ways they might increase the flow of information between individuals, departments, divisions and units. Floworks founder Dr. John-Paul Hatala is available for speaking engagements nationwide. If you are interested in booking him for an on-site speaking engagement, please call us at 1-877-flowork or visit [www.flowork.com](http://www.flowork.com) and click “contact us” to discuss your needs.